

**Child Support Advisory Board**  
**(REVISED) MINUTES**  
**March 20, 2003**

**Present**

1<sup>st</sup> District, Jane Preece  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Lucy T. Eisenberg  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Jean F. Cohen  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Maria Tortorelli  
5<sup>th</sup> District, Susan Speir  
5<sup>th</sup> District, Reginald Brass  
Chief Information Office,  
Earl Bradley  
Department of Children and Family Services,  
Patti Griffin  
Child Support Services Department,  
Philip Browning  
Department of Public Social Services,  
Rosie Ruiz  
CA Department of Child Support Services,  
Francine Woods

**Absent**

John Murrell, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Betty L. Nordwind, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Franchise Tax Board, Debbie Strong  
Superior Court, David Jetton

**Guests**

Steven Golightly, CSSD  
Lori Cruz, CSSD  
Julie Paik, CSSD  
Lisa Garrett, CSSD  
Gail Juiliano, CSSD  
Carol Mentell, CSSD  
Dean DeGruccio, CSSD

David Jacobson, CSSD  
Mike Pirolo, Auditor Controller  
Gloria Somerville, DPSS  
Ginger Ragazzi, DPSS  
John Tzortzoudakis, DPSS  
Lawrence Hill, SEIU Local 660

**Staff Support**

B. Eugene Romig, Board of Supervisors  
Steve Erickson, Board of Supervisors  
Audra Galang, Board of Supervisors

**CALL TO ORDER**

In the absence of a quorum, *Chairperson Eisenberg* called a meeting of the Committee of the Whole to order at 9:45 a.m.; a quorum was confirmed at 9:50 a.m. and the Commission meeting was called to order. Recently appointed Board Member Maria Tortorelli, who represents the Fourth District, was introduced.

Chairperson Eisenberg distributed a current membership roster and requested Members to forward updated contact information to staff.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

*Philip Browning, Director of the CSSD, reported the following:*

The Program Improvement Plan addresses how Los Angeles County can improve current child support collections; a large component of the performance improvement plan is the CSI project. Member Browning noted some performance improvements and reported that the County has increased its child support collection by \$12 million, a 7% increase from 28% to 35%. However, this improvement was lower than the state's goal of a 45% level of collections for Los Angeles County.

Chairperson Eisenberg inquired whether there would be an adjustment in improvement goals given the high level of unemployment in the state and the weakening local economy. Member Browning concurred there could be an adjustment in the state budget.

According to the state budget, counties will lose \$40 million in funding for child support programs; this reduction will be shared among the counties on a pro-rated basis and cuts from \$8 to \$15 million are anticipated for Los Angeles County. In addition, vacant staff positions can't be filled because of the current funding situation. However, child support programs are a priority in the state budget because of the availability of federal matching funds for these programs.

A Federal audit of 61 Los Angeles County cases met the performance standard for data reliability in the area of paternity establishment. Future data clean-ups will focus on cases involving current child support collections. Plans for a conversion to a statewide computer system would require a comprehensive data clean-up. The County anticipates converting its cases in January 2006.

Mr. Browning also reported that he and Chairperson Eisenberg participated in a Town Hall meeting with CSSD executive staff. Chairperson Eisenberg was impressed with the quality of information presented and response to the meeting.

Member Browning further reported on proposed state legislation, including bills on paternity disestablishment bills, regulation of private child support collection agencies and a collectibility study. CSSD staff has not met with Judge Bobb since the last meeting.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2003**

On motion of Vice Chair Speir, seconded by Member Browning and unanimously carried, the minutes of February 20, 2003 were approved with the following corrections:

On Page 4, change 4D to IV-D and change 4A to IV-A.

### **AUDITOR'S REPORT ON LOCATE**

Mike Pirolo, Principal Account Auditor, Auditor-Controller, reported that the Auditor's Report on Locate has not been completed. However, he outlined issues and recommendations from the draft report.

The Auditor Controller reviewed 33 randomly selected cases that had been open for several years, examining ARS case notes and Locate activity. Of these cases 14 had no successful Locate information for two years or more. The Report recommends that the department develop procedures to highlight cases that do not obtain the Locate information and that the CSSD contact the CP to obtain the contact information. In response to Chairperson Eisenberg, Mr. Pirolo indicated that most of the cases had an order to be served but had not been served as yet. California Family Code requires the CSSD to follow-up with the CP if the Department determines the address information provided was not accurate.

The Report also reviewed the department's process for verifying addresses obtained from the CP. Post office verification should have been sent to verify the address. There was a problem with the verification process in 11 of 12 cases. In four instances, the verification was never mailed to the post office although this was to be handled through automation. The Report recommends that CSSD research why the automated system failed to mail the verification letters and that the postal verification procedure be eliminated.

Member Brass inquired how addresses could be verified if incorrect information was given by the CP. Mr. Pirolo indicated there was no evidence that the CP's provided incorrect information. Member Browning indicated that the Co-Locate process is helping obtain more accurate address information.

The Report also reviewed the department's employment verification process. Of 18 cases reviewed in which the ARS search located an employer, there were four cases wherein the employment verification letter was not sent to the employer. It's recommended that the CSSD research this matter and that employer verification versus postal verification be utilized for NCP purposes. Also, during the review in November 2002, there was a significant CSSD backlog in the inputting of employment verifications received from the NCP's employer.

The Report also addresses concerns with ARS interface searches. In some cases the database information searched by ARS was old information. The Report recommends that the department research using other databases and sources of information.

Finally, the Auditor reviewed the Co-Locate process. Co-Locate staff in some cases did not obtain complete Locate information during the CP interview. For example, in all five cases observed, one or more forms were not completed in Leader. Another concern was that Co-Locate staff did not explain the purpose of the meeting to the CP's and the forms used in the interviews.

Chairperson Eisenberg inquired how the CSSD, which has been provided a copy of the draft report, would follow up on the recommendations. Mr. Pirollo indicated that the Auditor's final Report, including CSSD's response to the issues addressed, would be forthcoming. Member Browning noted that in response to the recommendations, CSSD is training the Co-Locate staff on interviewing techniques.

Chairperson Eisenberg requested discussion of the Auditor's Report on Locate at the next CSAB meeting provided that the final Report has been completed before the meeting. She requested that Mr. Pirollo forward the completed Report to staff by next month.

### **REPORT ON CASE OBSERVED DURING INTAKE PROCESS AND INTERFACE ISSUES**

Vice Chair Speir reported that she and Chairperson Eisenberg visited the CSSD Office twice to observe the intake process. On the first occasion they encountered a problem with the case not being identified as an MFG child by either the DPSS worker or the Co-Locate worker. On the second occasion, they encountered several problems, including mailing delays from DPSS to CSSD, delays from receipt of the case to intake at CSSD and the lack of legible intake information provided; in this case welfare approval or denial wasn't indicated on ARS. In addition, four cases were retrieved using one referral number. Although they were impressed by the worker, accessing the information took an hour and a half for one case. Further, Vice Chair Speir presented a summary of the case and a list of issues identified.

Ginger Ragazzi, DPSS, spoke on interface issues with CSSD and emphasized that DPSS staff has been working with CSSD staff to improve interface. Chairperson Eisenberg requested that Ms. Ragazzi and Jake Jacobson provide at the next meeting a clear description of data fields in the Leader and single index systems and identification of deficiencies in the interface. It was recommended that DPSS staff be trained to enter an Absent Parent (AP) when a case is taken and that a case not be referred to disposition until an AP is on the case. In addition, although DPSS needs to enter some information to start the intake process, the Department wants to avoid inputting non-specific data such as "unknown" in data fields. This creates problems when erroneous data is cross-matched with other data fields.

Member Preece inquired whether the CP is required to provide a birth certificate when opening a case. Ms. Ragazzi indicated that during the intake process the CP may sign an affidavit as an alternative and DPSS would forward a verification letter to the Registrar-Recorder's Office.

In response to Member Brass, Ms. Ragazzi indicated that information on AP's is not provided until after the birth of the child. Therefore, the AP's aren't notified of their child support obligations until after the child's birth.

Chairperson Eisenberg inquired whether incorrect information was being provided to eligibility workers and Co-Locate workers. Member Browning indicated that an effective

interface between the two data systems would allow cross-checking to ensure accurate data.

#### **REPORT ON CASE INVOLVING SUB-SERVICE WHERE NCP CONTACTED CALL CENTER: ISSUE ON ADVICE TO CALLERS**

Vice Chair Speir reported on a case in which a woman from Indiana contacted the call center and received sub service. The child support office had opened the case after she moved to Indiana and she learned of her child support obligation through the IRS. The process server from the child support office initiated a sub service in December of 2001 at Long Beach City College, although she had moved from her job at that location one year earlier.

When she contacted the call center, the worker informed her that someone had been served at Long Beach City College, even though she provided documentation of her employment and residence in Indiana. Chairperson Eisenberg indicated that when the woman contacted the call center, the worker told her she could get a downward modification, which could be contrary to her interest. Chairperson Eisenberg inquired about the policies and procedures followed by the process server and the policies for determining when the process service is sub-par.

Dean DeGruccio, CSSD Call Center, reported that Call Center workers explain options to callers but do not provide legal advice. The non-custodial parent contacted the Call Center at least three times asserting she was not served and didn't want to pay the amount in question. On each occasion, she was told she could contact the Court Facilitator's office and was given the phone number. Further, she was told that she could talk to the Facilitator about a vacate motion or a downward modification.

Thereafter, the non-custodial parent called the Call Center again specifically seeking a downward modification. The case worker then sent her the appropriate paperwork for a modification.

A discussion ensued regarding what the Call Center's policy was and what it should be in such situations.

Vice Chair Speir inquired why the woman was required to pay \$225 monthly in child support payments. Gail Juiliano, CSSD, noted that this amount is the standard required based on minimum wage and each case is not evaluated for a set aside. If a set aside was appropriate for cases in the CSI project, it would be pulled out of the project and referred to the court facilitator.

Agenda items 6, 7 and 11 were deferred to the next meeting.

#### **REPORT ON STATUS OF CSI PROGRAM**

Lori Cruz, CSSD, presented statistics on CSI Case Listings Dollar Amounts and Annual Reductions and Modification Case Listings Dollar Amounts (copy on file). Of 57 cases, 53 orders were obtained. Since the pilot, a 25% appearance rate was reported during

the modification phase for Los Angeles area cases. However, 10% of the cases are calendared for continuance. In the modification project the goal was to have 500 cases on calendar. There are approximately 92,000 potential cases for modification review.

Chairperson Eisenberg inquired about the timeline for this project. Ms. Cruz indicated that many case clean-up lists need to be completed. However, a smaller team is working on case clean-up due to a current priority on modification reviews which need to be completed by July 2003.

Chairperson Eisenberg requested discussion at the next CSAB meeting of performance measures and whether the CSAB meeting location should be changed to the CSSD Office in the City of Commerce.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.